ゼロから始める魔法の書

I

Magic book
to
start from
Zero

作画／いわさきたかし
原作／虎走かける
キャラクターデザイン／しずまよしのり

電撃コミックス
NEXT

TOUCH YOUR FINGER TO MINE, LIKE THIS.
THIS IS A BLOOD OATH, RIGHT?
THE YEAR IS 526.
IN THIS WORLD, THERE ARE WITCHES,
...YOU HAVE MY OATH, MERCENARY.
I WILL NEVER TAKE YOUR HEAD.
ALRIGHT, THANKS.
...BY THE WAY, WITCH,
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
AND THE STUDY OF SPELL-CRAFT.

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DIE

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN CHASING ME FOR...?
IF I STOP, I'LL DIE.
DAMN IT, I DON'T CARE ANYMORE!
I WASN'T BORN TO BE YOUR DAMN SACRIFICE!!
SCREW YOU, WITCHES! I HOPE YOU ALL DIE!

AH...
IT'LL ALL END WITH THIS SIMPLE FALL...
AND IF IT DOESN'T, THEN I'LL PROBABLY LAND IN A RIVER AND GET CARRIED AWAY...
AAAAAHHHHH!!!
ボシャーン
バシャ

H...
HOW DARE YOU!

I—I MADE THAT SOUP MYSELF!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH TROUBLE YOU'VE JUST CAUSED ME!?
I WAS PLANNING ON EATING IT, NOT COOKING AN ANIMAL IN IT!!
GIVE IT... GIVE IT... GIVE IT...
C-C-C-CALM DOWN! I'M REALLY SORRY, SO JUST...!
JUST WHAT!? WHAT DO YOU SEE HERE THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY SOU—
LOOK OUT!!

GOOD THING YOU TALK FAST.
...OH, THAT.
HA!!
RUN!

HEY,
WHY ARE YOU CARRYING ME?
WHY DOES IT LOOK LIKE!?
ARE YOU... BEING CHASED?
YES, I'M BEING CHASED! BY SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO KILL ME!
...WHAT DID YOU DO?
NOTHING! THEY JUST WANT TO USE ME AS A SACRIFICE
BECAUSE I'M A FALLEN!

TH FALLEN BEASTS
EVERY NOW AND THEN ORDINARY HUMANS WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A HALF-HUMAN HALF-ANIMAL MONSTER LIKE ME
AND WITCHES WANT FALLEN TO USE AS TOOLS FOR SPELLCRAFT
I WAS SOLD TO A WITCH LIKE THAT. THEY REALLY LIKE USING US.
...IS THAT A STAIM?
メキ
バキ
バキ
HEY
DO YOU REALLY NEED TO RUN FROM IT?
ぽん
ぽん
ドーン
OF COURSE I DO!
OR I'LL DIE!!

THAT ISN'T TRUE.
...ALRIGHT.
PUT ME DOWN.
FAREWELL TRAVELER
I WILL LIVE ON
ドン!
イ

.....
WHAT IS WITH HIM...
...NOW THEN.

WAAH!!?

DAMN IT!
OW...!

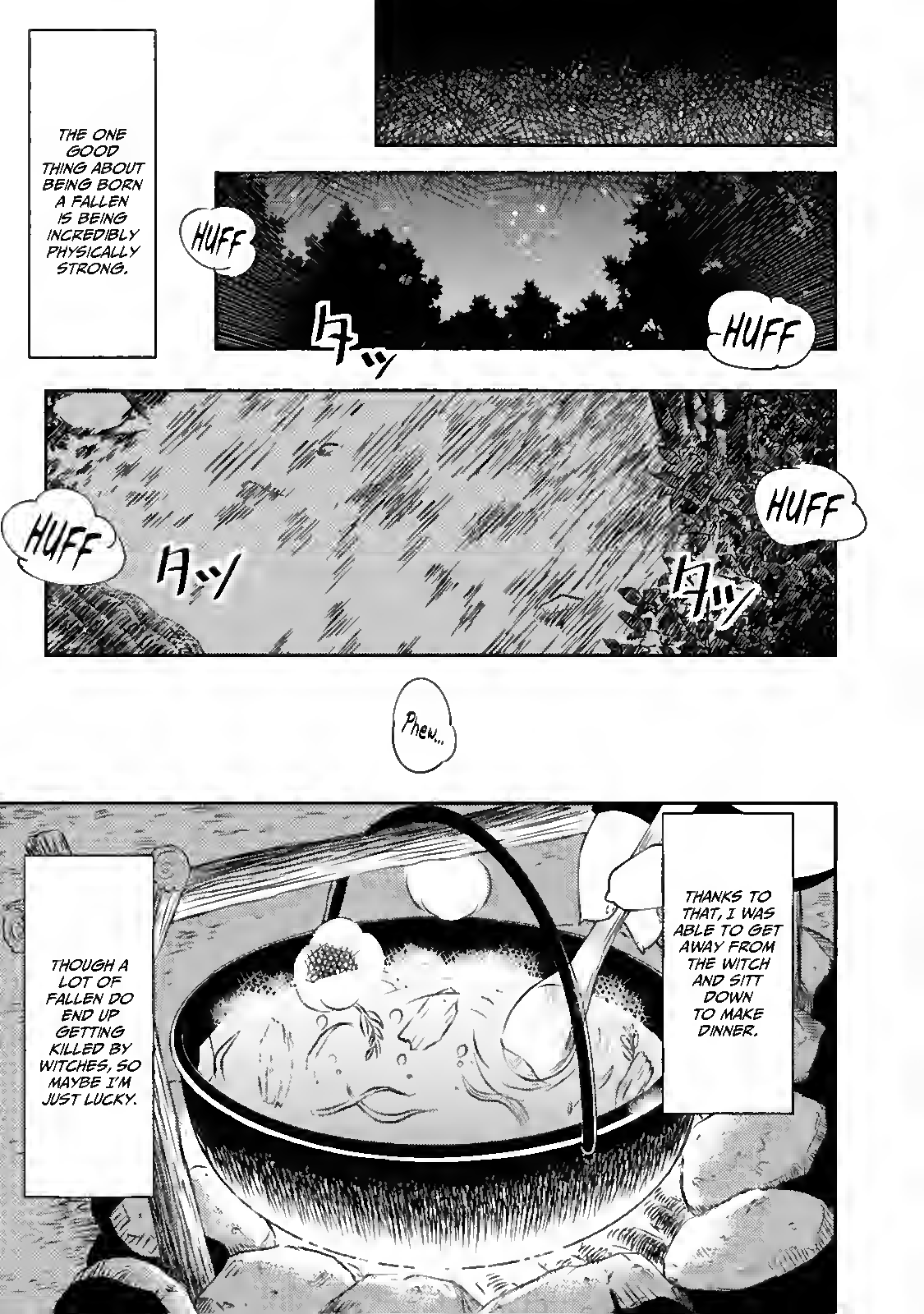
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!?
A WOMAN?
...IT'S A WOMAN.
...NO WAY.
IS SHE... THE ONE
WHO'S DOING THIS?

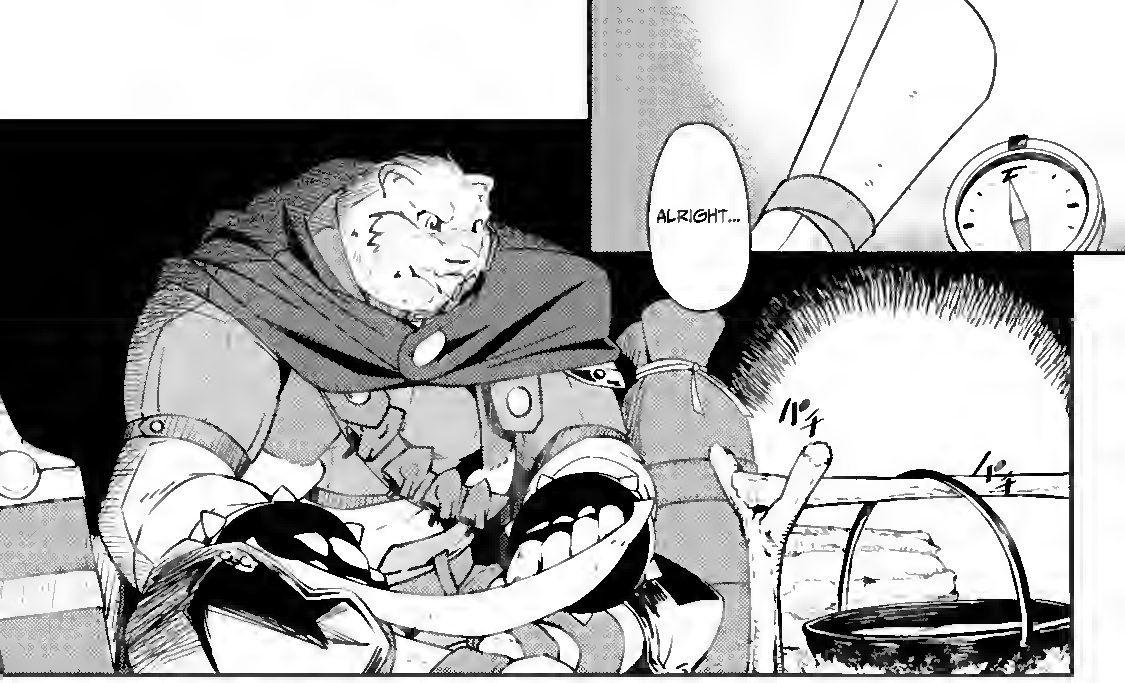
フッ
THE BOOK OF CAPTURE, VERSE THREE: ETRAK.
SOME-THING AS WEAK AS A STAIM SHOULD BE ABLE TO BREAK OUT, BUT IT WOULD TAKE A FULL DAY.

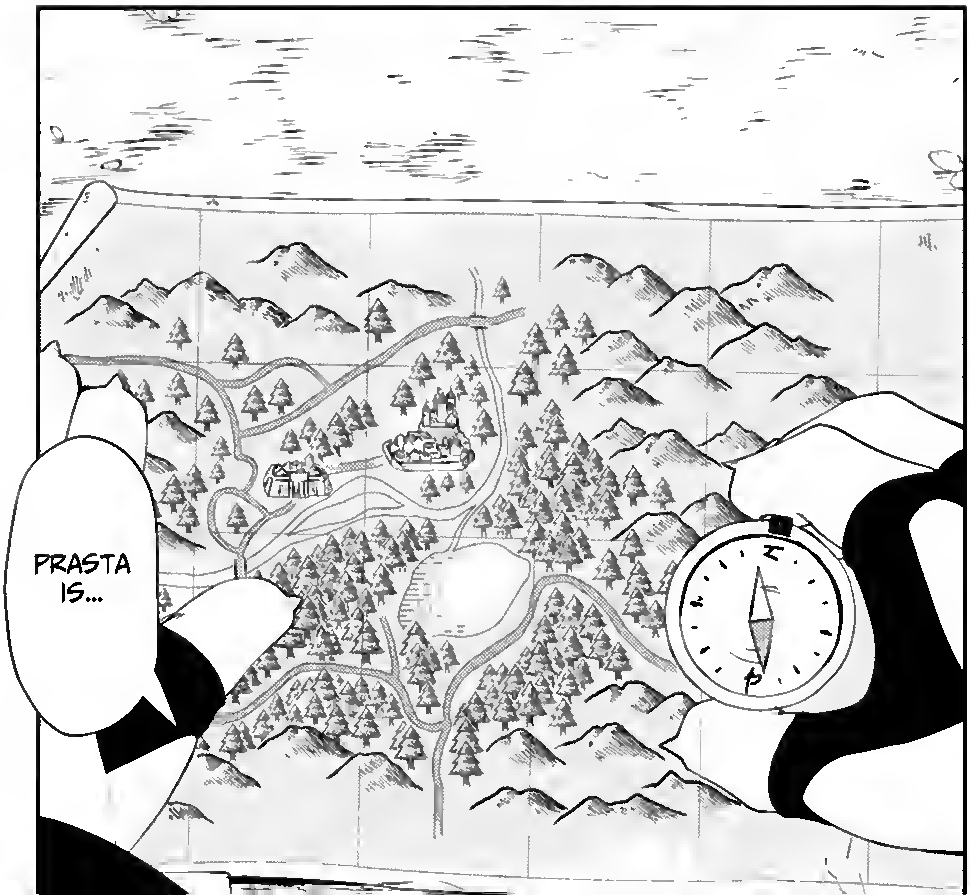
NOW,
WE CAN TALK FREELY.
AN EDAREST WOULD BE ABLE TO ESCAPE,
BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO REST FIRST.

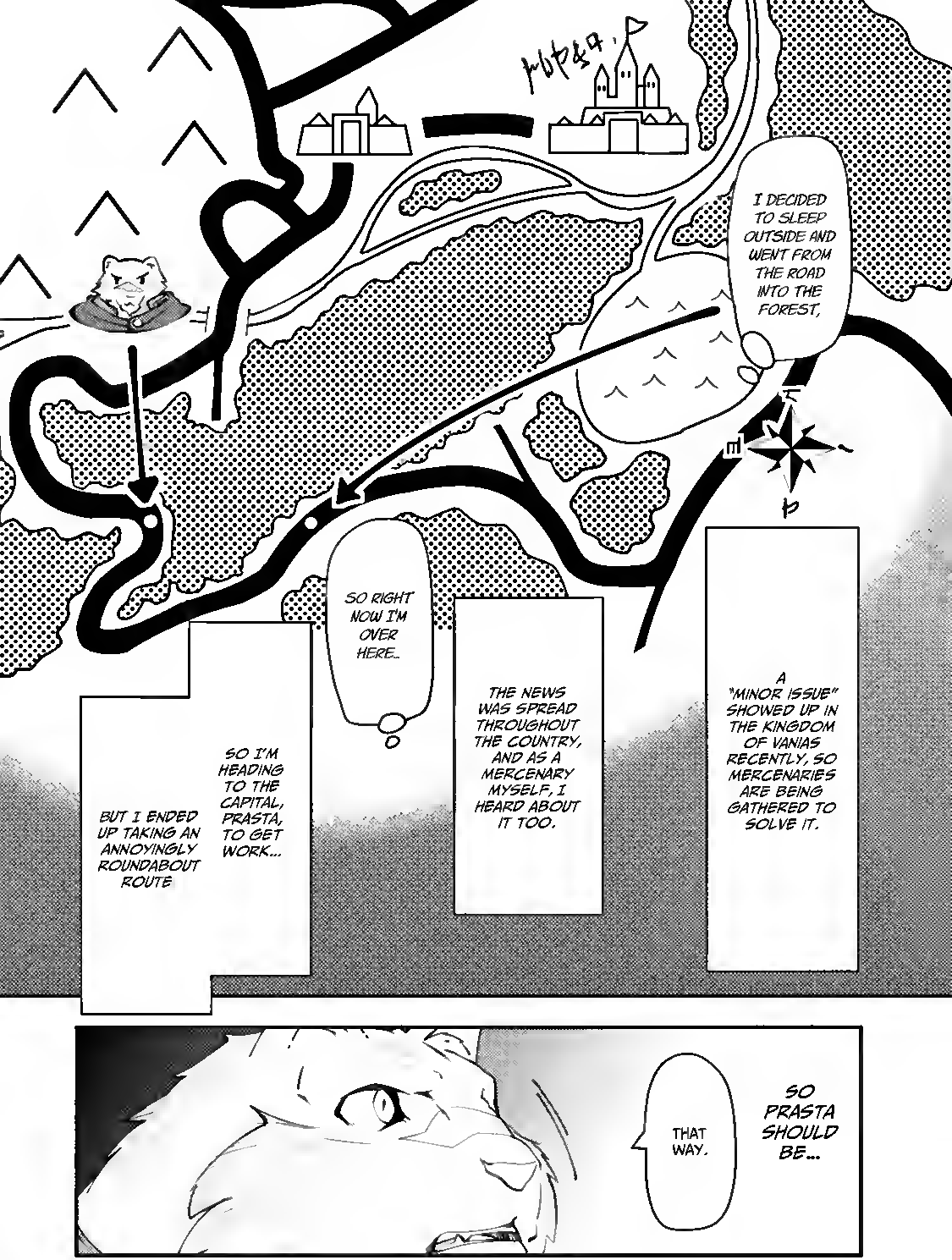
Y... YOU...
ARE YOU...
A WITCH...?

I AM INDEED A WITCH.
ONE WHO CAN FIND MEANING WHERE THERE IS NONE, AND DRAW FORTH EXISTENCE FROM NOTHING.
スス
スイー
THE WITCH OF EARTH AND DARKNESS...
ESCAPE
Ah.


THE ONE GOOD THING ABOUT BEING BORN A FALLEN IS BEING INCREDIBLY PHYSICALLY STRONG.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
Phew...
THANKS TO THAT, I WAS ABLE TO GET AWAY FROM THE WITCH AND SITT DOWN TO MAKE DINNER.
THOUGH A LOT OF FALLEN DO END UP GETTING KILLED BY WITCHES, SO MAYBE I'M JUST LUCKY.


ALRIGHT...


PRASTA IS...


A "MINOR ISSUE" SHOWED UP IN THE KINGDOM OF VANIAS RECENTLY, SO MERCENARIES ARE BEING GATHERED TO SOLVE IT.
THE NEWS WAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND AS A MERCENARY MYSELF, I HEARD ABOUT IT TOO.
SO RIGHT NOW I'M OVER HERE...
I DECIDED TO SLEEP OUTSIDE AND WENT FROM THE ROAD INTO THE FOREST,
BUT I ENDED UP TAKING AN ANNOYINGLY ROUNDABOUT ROUTE
SO I'M HEADING TO THE CAPITAL, PRASTA, TO GET WORK...
SO PRASTA SHOULD BE...
THAT WAY.

GAAAAAAAHHHH!!
Hm?
WH...
WHY ARE YOU EATING MY SOUP!?
カバッ

NO, IT'S MINE! MINE!
ガシ
Ah!
G-GIVE THAT BACK! THAT'S MY DINNER!
YOU NEVER PAID ME BACK FOR MY SOUP!
SO YOU GIVING THIS TO ME IS ONLY RIGHT!
NO PART OF GIVING ANYTHING TO A WITCH IS RIGHT!
FINE. THEN IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE LIKE THAT,
What are you doing!?
THEN I'LL BE LIKE THIS.

I'LL USE SPELL-CRAFT.
!!

LISTEN WELL. IF YOU DON'T GIVE ME THAT SOUP RIGHT NOW, I'LL CAUSE A FAMINE IN THE NORTH, AN EPIDEMIC IN THE WEST, A PLAGUE OF RATS IN THE SOUTH, AND DESTROY ALL THE CROPS IN THE EAST.
THE WORLD WILL BE DESTROYED BECAUSE OF YOU! NOW GIVE IT BACK!
GO AHEAD.

ス…
I'M…
…HUH?
……
……
ペタン
I'M HUNGRY TOO…
I'M SO HUNGRY… I SPENT A FULL DAY ON THAT SOUP…
I WAS… LOOKING FORWARD TO IT… SO MUCH… EVER SINCE THIS MORNING…

AND IT TASTED SO GOOD... I WANTED TO EAT IT SO MUCH...
……
FINE. HERE.
かぷり!!
YOU COULD HAVE JUST DONE THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
Instead of acting so naughty
ごくごく

ズズ…
おっ
はむ
……
WHAT EXACTLY IS IT YOU WANT WITH ME?
MORE.
もぐ!!
もぐ!!

I TRULY WOULD LIKE TO ANSWER THAT, BUT I JUST DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DO SO ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.
.....
I'LL GIVE YOU ONE MORE BOWL IF YOU ANSWER ME.

I'M LOOKING FOR A MAN NAMED THIRTEEN.
THIRTEEN STUDIED SPELLCRAFT ALONGSIDE ME IN THE BOW MOON FOREST. BUT HE TOOK ON A DANGEROUS JOB AND LEFT THE CAVE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW.
I'VE BEEN TRACKING HIM BY FOLLOWING THE TRACES OF HIS POWER, BUT...
THIS COUNTRY IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A WITCH HUNT.
THEY HAVE THOSE ALL OVER THE WORLD.
THEY'RE MUCH MORE VIOLENT HERE. THOUGH PEOPLE HAVE TRIED TO BURN ME AT THE STAKE THREE TIMES BY NOW WHEN I'VE DONE NOTHING BUT WALK AROUND IN PUBLIC.

YEAH,
I'VE HEARD THAT WITCHES ARE STARTING TO REVOLT.
That's why the witch hunts are so violent
REVOLT?
.....
DOESN'T THAT SEEM A BIT BEHIND THE TIMES?
...TELL THAT TO THE WITCH WHO ATTACKED ME ON THE ROAD.
THESE DAYS...

PUTTING ASIDE WITCHES WHO ACTUALLY HURT PEOPLE,
HUNTING ORDINARY WITCHES WHO JUST KEEP TO THEMSELVES ISN'T GOING TO MAKE ANYONE HAPPY,
SO THERE'S NO POINT IN HUNTING THEM.
BUT THERE IS ONE GROUP THAT'S A PROBLEM FOR...
THE CHURCH.
TO THEM, THE WITCH HUNTS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN A MEANS FOR THEM TO ASSERT THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY.
IF THERE'S NO EVIL, THEN THERE CAN'T BE ANY JUSTICE, AND IF THERE'S NO JUSTICE, PEOPLE WON'T BELIEVE IN GOD,
SO THEY DECIDED THAT THE WITCHES WERE EVIL

...THEN THAT "DANGEROUS JOB" YOU MENTIONED MUST HAVE BEEN HELPING OUT WITH THAT REVOLUTION
SO DID YOU COME HERE TO HELP WITH THAT TOO?
ABSOLUTELY NOT. THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MASSIVE PAIN.
IF THE REVOLUTION WERE TO SUCCEED, I WOULD HAVE TO HELP RULE THIS COUNTRY, WOULDN'T I?
THAT WOULD TAKE EFFORT.
BESIDES, IF I HAD TO RULE SOME PLACE, I'D RATHER IT BE A SMALL, DARK COUNTRY WITH LOTS OF SPIDERS.
THAT KINDA COUNTRY DOESN'T EXIST...
HUH?
The pot's gone

!?
WHEN DID YOU— WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
Mmmh
I AM A WITCH, BEAST KNIGHT.
YOUR LUCK RAN OUT WHEN YOU LET DOWN YOUR GUARD. THIS SOUP IS NOW MINE.
WHY YOU...!

[redacted]

WHAT IS THIS DANGEROUS JOB THEN?

..SO?

A SEARCH.
SOME UNSAVORY PEOPLE STOLE A BOOK FROM US, AND THIRTEEN SET OFF TO TAKE IT BACK
A BOOK?
ONLY A SINGLE COPY OF IT EXISTS, AND IT WOULD BE RATHER UNFORTUNATE IF IT FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WOULD USE IT FOR EVIL.

DEFINE "RATHER UNFORTUNATE."
ピ
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……
THE WORLD'S DESTRUCTION.

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……
11°/4
11°/4
THE WORLD'S WHAT NOW?
DESTRUC-TION.
THAT DOES SOUND BAD.
KINDA STARTING TO CRY HERE.
YOU'RE FREE TO NOT BELIEVE ME. BUT CAN YOU AT LEAST TONE DOWN THE SARCASM? IT REALLY HURTS.

WELL WHO'D BELIEVE THAT A SINGLE BOOK COULD DESTROY THE ENTIRE WORLD?
A SINGLE BOOK..?
FORGET THE WHOLE THING, A SINGLE PAGE COULD DESTROY A GOOD TWELFTH OF IF.
ALRIGHT, LET'S ASSUME YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH.
WHAT'S IT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
YOU HAVEN'T FIGURED THAT PART OUT YET?
SADLY, I'M A BIT SLOW ON THE UPTAKE.
ESSENTIALLY, THE BOOK IS SOMEWHERE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND I NEED TO GET IT BACK.
BUT AS A WITCH, JUST WALKING AROUND IN THIS COUNTRY IS RISKING MY LIFE.
OH, RIGHT.
SO...

YOU WILL BE MY BODY-GUARD.
HELL NO!
SUCH A FORCEFUL REFUSAL...
WOULD YOU MIND EXPLAIN-ING?

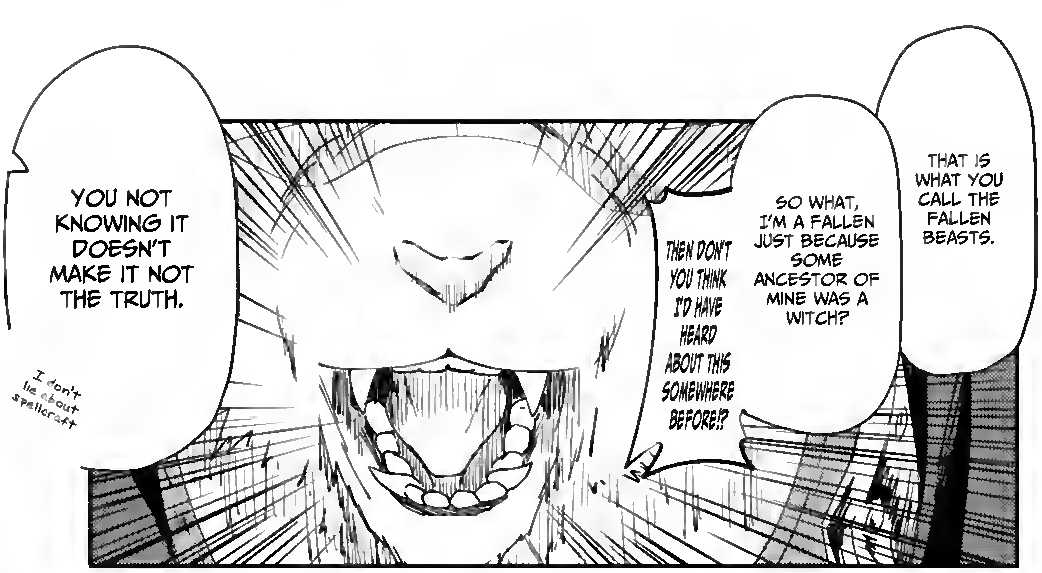
I HATE WITCHES!!
OF COURSE, YOU WOULDN'T BE DOING IT FOR FREE.
Just hear me out
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY.
I CAME TO THIS COUNTRY TO WIPE OUT THE WITCHES.
BEING A WITCH'S BODYGUARD WOULD BE LITERALLY THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO.
YOU DO REALIZE THERE'S A WITCH RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU... WHY DO YOU HATE WITCHES SO MUCH?
UM... YOU CAN'T TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT MY FACE?

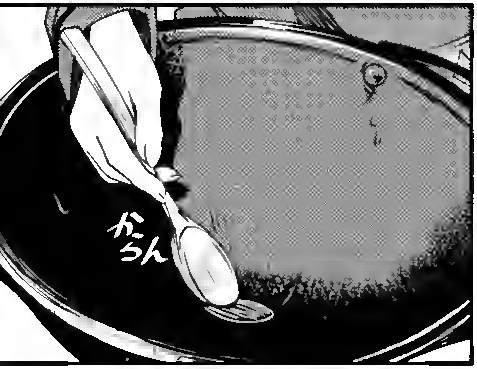
YOUR FACE...?
.....
IT IS RATHER HANDSOME.
I CANNOT SAY I DISLIKE IT
ENOUGH WITH THE SARCASM!
WHO'S BEING SARCASTIC? SMOOTH FUR, SHARP EYES, A SQUARE JAW.. QUITE PERFECT FOR A PREDATORY BEAST.
AND THE HUMAN FACE UNDERNEATH IS QUITE FINE AS WELL, IN MY OPINION.
!!
.....
はた、
YOU CAN SEE MY FACE?
NATURALLY. I WOULD HARDLY BE ABLE TO CALL MYSELF A WITCH IF I COULDN'T.
AH, I SEE THE ISSUE.
YOU SEE, YOU CALL YOURSELF A FALLEN BEAST, BUT THE FULL TERM WOULD BE "COUNTERSPELL OF THE DEGRADED BEAST."

COUN... COUNTER-SPELL?
THE RESULT OF WITCHES TRYING TO GIVE HUMANS THE POWERS OF ANIMALS
THE ACT OF TRANSFORMING KNIGHTS INTO POWERFUL BEASTS BECAME KNOWN AS "BEAST DEGRADATION."
THE WITCHES CREATED THE FALLEN!?
WELL, NOT EXACTLY.
SPELLS AND COUNTERSPELLS LOOK SIMILAR, BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IS VAST.
A SPELL IS A SPONTANEOUS ACT OF WILL. WHILE A COUNTERSPELL ALWAYS PRODUCES THE SAME RESULT, LIKE CLOCKWORK.
SORRY, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
I'LL SHOW YOU.
GIVE ME THAT ROCK OVER THERE.

LET'S SAY THIS ROCK IS SPELL-CRAFT.
THEN AS A WITCH, I'LL "CAST" IT.
ヒョイ

I THREW IT AT THE TREE.
.....
OW.
YES. WHEN A BEAST KNIGHT DIES, THEIR SOUL RETURNS TO THE WITCH.
IF THAT WITCH IS DEAD, IT RETURNS TO THE CLOSEST BEING TO THE WITCH THAT PERFORMED THE SPELL-CRAFT.
IT BOUNCES OFF THE TREE AND HIT ME?
AND THEN WHEN IT BOUNCED OFF THE TREE, IT DIDN'T HIT ME.
IT HIT YOU INSTEAD. SPELLCRAFT WORKS THE SAME WAY.
AND THEN THAT SOUL GROWS IN THE WOMAN'S WOMB, AND IS BORN AS A NEW BEAST KNIGHT.
GENER-ALLY, THAT ENDS UP BEING ONE OF THEIR DESCEN-DANTS.


THAT IS WHAT YOU CALL THE FALLEN BEASTS.
SO WHAT, I'M A FALLEN JUST BECAUSE SOME ANCESTOR OF MINE WAS A WITCH?
THEN DON'T YOU THINK I'D HAVE HEARD ABOUT THIS SOMEWHERE BEFORE!?
YOU NOT KNOWING IT DOESN'T MAKE IT NOT THE TRUTH.
I don't lie about spellcraft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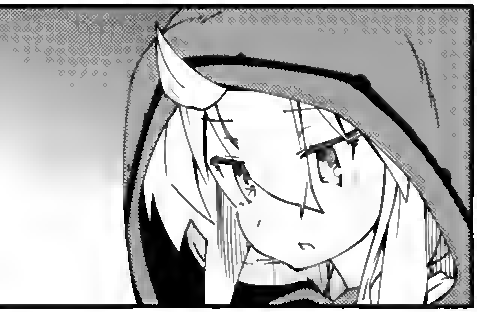

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BUT...
IF ONE OF MY ANCES-TORS WAS A WITCH...
WITCHES TEND TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES, AND LIVE FOR AN EXTRAOR-DINARILY LONG TIME.
IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT EVEN IF A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY WAS A WITCH, EVERYONE HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HER BEFORE THE SPELL RETURNED.

...DO YOU WANT TO BE HUMAN?
...IS THAT POSSIBLE?

SO WHAT WILL YOU DO, MERCENARY? WILL YOU OBEY ME IN EXCHANGE?
OH, IT'S SIMPLE
A HEAD WITHOUT A BODY ATTACHED WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GUARD ME VERY WELL, WOULD IT?
IT IS RATHER CHARMING, I'LL ADMIT,
BUT YOUR HEAD DON'T INTEREST ME NEARLY AS MUCH AS THE REST OF YOU.
.....
THE HEADS OF PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE PRETTY VALUABLE TO WITCHES AREN'T THEY...?
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS
IF I WERE GOING TO DO THAT, I WOULDN'T BOTHER ASKING YOU TO GUARD ME
HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT JUST GOING TO WAIT UNTIL I LET MY GUARD DOWN AND TAKE MY HEAD THEN?

I'M TALKING WITH A WITCH AND I'M STILL ALIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT.
THIS WITCH SEEMS TO BE WORTH TRUSTING.
WELL, OF COURSE I'M NOT GOING TO SAY THAT, BUT I AT LEAST KNOW I DON'T NEED TO DISTRUST HER AS MUCH AS THE OTHERS.
I FEEL LIKE I WANT TO BE ABLE TO TRUST HER.

BUT DO I REALLY?
IF...
SHE REALLY IS LYING...
SO SHALL WE...

YOU WILL GUARD ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU HUMAN.
A CONTRACT WILL RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF EITHER PARTY SHOULD THEY VIOLATE IT.
DE... DESTRUC-TION...? UH...
IF IT SCARES YOU, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS NOT BREAK IT.

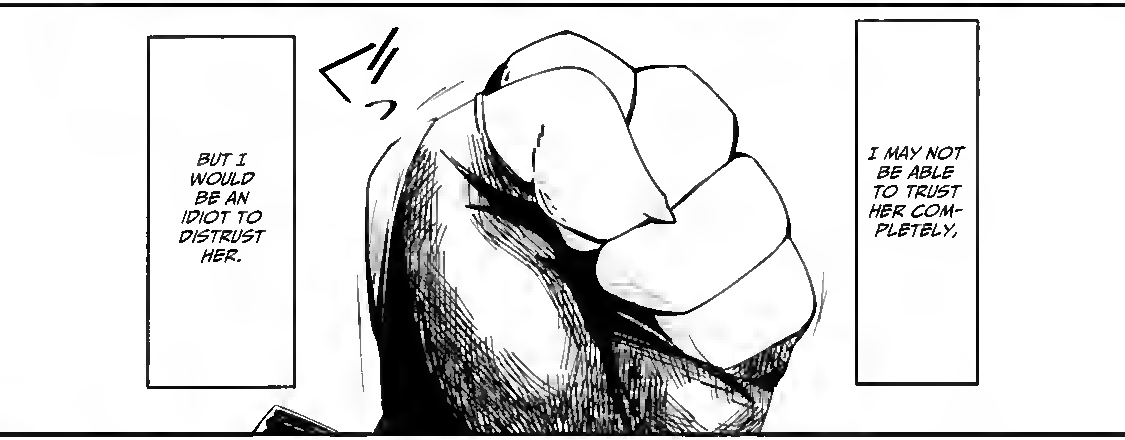
MAKE A CONTRACT?
A CONTRACT?

GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

H-
HEY!
CHOMP
...
!!
THE CONTRACT WILL BE WRITTEN WITH INK MAKE OF OUR BLOOD MIXED TOGETHER
IF EITHER OF US DIES, THE OTHER WILL BE RELEASED FROM THE CONTRACT.
UNTIL IS IS BROKEN OR COMPLETED, THE TWO OF US SHALL BE BOUND TOGETHER.
SADLY, I DON'T HAVE ANY PAPER ON ME.
..I'LL JUST USE THIS CLOTH.
HEY...
WITCH.

WHY ME?
WOULDN'T BEING WITH A FALLEN JUST MAKE YOU STAND OUT EVEN MORE?
JUST THE OPPOSITE YOU WILL DRAW EVERYONE'S ATTENTION TO YOURSELF, AND THEREFORE AWAY FROM ME.
AND BESIDES, YOU HAVE A SMELL THAT REMINDS ME OF THE CAVE.
I SMELL LIKE A CAVE?
A LARGE LIMESTONE CAVERN IN THE BOW MOON FOREST.
THAT'S WHAT WE CALL A CAVE.
It's like a code word for a witch's hideout
DO YOU RAISE ANIMALS THERE OR SOME-THING?
MM... OF A SORT.
THERE ARE A LOT OF SPIDERS AND SNAKES THERE.
. AS SOON AS WE FIND A PLACE TO SLEEP, I'M TAKING A BATH.

WHEN MY THOUGHTS TURNED TO TAKING A BATH IN THE MIDDLE OF TALKING TO A WITCH,
I REALIZED THAT SHE TRULY MEANT ME NO HARM.
THE MOMENT I THOUGHT THAT, A WEIRD SMILE CAME TO MY FACE.


I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TRUST HER COMPLETELY,
BUT I WOULD BE AN IDIOT TO DISTRUST HER.

AHH!!
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO WRITE IT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
Aah!!
HEY! THE CONTRACT STILL ISN'T—

DON'T BOTHER. WHO NEEDS IT?
HERE, GIMME YOUR HAND.
Ah.
THIS IS A BLOOD OATH, RIGHT?
WORKS BETTER FOR ME THAN A WITCH'S SEAL OF BLOOD.
THIS WAY'S BETTER AS A HUMAN AND AS A MERCE-NARY.
...YOU HAVE MY OATH, MERCE-NARY. I WILL NEVER TAKE YOUR HEAD.
ALRIGHT, THANKS.
...BY THE WAY, WITCH, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I AM ZERO.
……
YOU'RE NOT..
GOING TO ASK MY NAME?
I DON'T CARE ABOUT IT.
HUH?
THE ONLY ONES I ADDRESS BY NAME ARE THOSE WHO SERVE ME.. NAMELY, MY SERVANTS.
WERE I TO LEARN YOUR TRUE NAME, I COULD JUST USE IT TO FORCEFULLY BIND YOU TO MY SERVICE.
RIGHT...
YOU REALLY ARE A WITCH.
ガーン

OH YES, I REALLY AM A WITCH.
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU, MERCENARY.